

IN THE SADDLE

His joy's unbridled as he sculpts bronc

*Life-size statue will grace entrance
to Spanish Fork Fairgrounds.*

By Christi C. Babbitt
Deseret News staff writer

SPANISH FORK — A Lehi artist is capturing the spirit of the modern rodeo in a sculpture to be placed at the entrance of the Spanish Fork Fairgrounds.

Kraig Varner has been commissioned to create a life-size bucking bronc and rider by the Fairgrounds Beautification Project Committee. The committee's goal is to have the project completed by July 24, 1996, in time for the Spanish Fork Fiesta Days Celebration during Utah's centennial year.

Committee members recently began fund-raising efforts for the project; they are seeking donations from the public and will be contacting businesses to solicit donations of both money and materials.

Cleve Swenson, committee treasurer, said the entire project, including the statue and the proposed landscaping, is estimated to cost about \$100,000.

The idea for a statue celebrating the rodeo came up as plans were being developed to continue landscaping efforts at the fairgrounds, said Boyd Peterson, committee chairman. Landscape architects developed a plan that included a statue with a pond and waterfall be-



Kraig Varner works on model of his statue of bucking bronco and rider, due by July 24, 1996.

hind it and landscaping all around these elements.

Three artists sculpted small versions of their ideas for the statue for the committee's consideration; Varner's was selected. Committee member Susan Levanger said she believes Varner was chosen because his creation por-

trayed the horse and rider realistically.

"Even the cinch straps were very, very accurate," she said.

Varner has since altered his idea slightly, changing the angles somewhat to try and put

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more action into his creation. He currently is working on a small clay model. He will later create a version one-quarter of life-size before beginning the full-size work.

This process helps the sculptor work with various ideas and solve problems before he begins work on the large version.

"On a large one, it could take you all day just to move an arm," he said. He estimates the finished work will be between 10 and 14 feet tall, including the base. It will likely require about 2,000 pounds of clay to sculpt the final work, he said.

Varner's sculpture captures the bucking bronc in mid-leap with its back legs high in the air and its front legs just landing on the

ground. He plans to sculpt smaller depictions of other rodeo events around the large work's oval-shaped base.

Varner has worked on large sculptures before; in 1993, he was awarded a commission to create a 9-foot sculpture of Brigham Young to be placed in the Utah State Capitol rotunda. A full-time sculptor since 1986, his works have been exhibited in many galleries.

"I love sculpting horses," he said. "There's nothing like being on a horse and feeling that motion under you."

He plans to interview cowboys to get a feel for what it's like to be in a rodeo. He can then interpret that feeling through his art.

Those interested in donating to the sculpture project should call the Spanish Fork city offices, 798-5000, and ask for Tonya Taylor, or call Cleve Swenson at 798-7196.

STUART JOHNSON, DESERET NEWS

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very childish.

"He's a good man," she said.

"He never did me any harm."
Possession of an explosive device is a second-degree felony. If convicted, Birkinbine could face a prison sentence of 1 to 15 years.

Dawson said he is "very optimistic" the bombing and murder cases will be resolved soon.

Deseret News Staff Writer Nicole A. Bonham contributed to this report.

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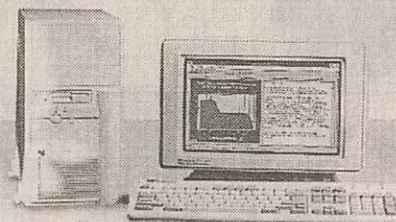
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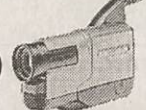
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